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ABSTRACT

The materials in this pamphlet describe the difficulties encountered by various racial and ethnic groups as they attempted to become assimilated into the American labor force. The experiences and problems faced by blacks, Jews, and immigrants from England, Ireland, the Scandinavian countries, China, Italy, and Puerto Rico are described in an attempt to correct many of the racial and ethnic stereotypes that American workers have about one another. The contributions that each of these ethnic and racial groups made to the U.S. labor movement are stressed. The following are among the topics covered: religious differences among immigrants from England, West African society, blacks as indentured servants and slaves, competition between blacks and white immigrant workers, the Jim Crow laws, the role of blacks in the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), problems experienced by railroad workers and miners, anti-Chinese sentiments and riots, the Chinese Exclusion Act, the reasons behind the Jewish immigration to the United States, the padrone system and the problems it caused Italian immigrants, strikes and strikebreakers, the negative impact of U.S. rule on the Puerto Rican labor market, and problems encountered by Puerto Ricans in the United States. All of the materials originally appeared as a series of articles in the community newspaper "The Link," which is published by the United Community Centers of Brooklyn, New York. A 5-page list of significant dates in the U.S. labor movement and a list of labor history resources (print and film) conclude the pamphlet. (MN)

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# Heritage of Struggle

## A History of American Working People

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# Heritage of Struggle

## A History of American Working People

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Much of the credit for this pamphlet goes to the volunteers and staff of the United Community Centers who have played a major role in shaping my perspective on the history of working people. Special thanks goes to Lois Nowicki who first suggested that the individual articles be turned into a single work. Her assistance in the preparation of the original manuscript and her constant interest in the project contributed, in no small measure, to its eventual conclusion.

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# Introduction

The material in this pamphlet originally appeared as a series of articles in the community newspaper, *The Link*, published by the United Community Centers of Brooklyn, New York. It aimed at correcting many of the racial and ethnic stereotypes that working people have about one another. Upon completion of the series, it became clear that the story that it told had meaning for workers in all parts of the country, not just New York City. The experiences described in the following pages are representative of the history of all people who came to this country with rough hands and strong backs, determined to make a decent life for themselves and their families. Whether they travelled to America of their own free will or whether they came involuntarily as slaves or bond-servants, the new world represented a land of almost unlimited opportunity in the minds of most newcomers.

The reality of life in the United States did not, however, correspond to their dreams. Instead of milk and honey they found low wages, cruel overseers, farm foreclosures, overcrowded tenement districts, hunger and unemployment. Slavs and Poles in the Pittsburgh steel mills found twelve-hour workdays and twenty-four hour weekend shifts. Filipinos and Japanese laboring in California orchards experienced racial discrimination and violence. German and Austrian brewery workers in Saint Louis and Milwaukee confronted policemen's clubs and guns. Blacks searching for economic opportunities in the North ran into race riots and lynchings.

While individuals from every group climbed the ladder of economic and social success, most people remained locked in the struggle for daily survival. Those denied access to the "American Dream" turned to collective action to combat injustice. They combined traditions of protest brought with them from the old country with the democratic, republican heritage of their new homeland. Utilizing relationships formed through networks of local churches, fraternal organizations and benefit societies they confronted employers and hostile government officials, demanding their rights as they perceived them to be defined in the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

The labor movement represented a natural vehicle for their protests. In some cases trade unions and other labor organizations welcomed immigrants and minorities with open arms. In other situations a fear of losing control over scarce jobs or a continued belief in long held stereotypes led organized workers

to turn their backs on their fellow wage earners. This rejection contributed to the formation of local unions organized on an ethnic or racial basis. Over time increasing numbers of immigrants and minority group members joined the labor movement which, in turn, became a major force in breaking down many of the barriers and prejudices in American society.

The tremendous diversity of the American working class has been both its weakness and its strength. In hard times employers manipulate one group against another, using racial or ethnic antagonisms to keep the workforce divided. If Chinese workers went on strike in California, commercial farmers brought in Blacks to scab. When native-born or English coal miners protested wage cuts, Pennsylvania mine operators hired trainloads of recently arrived Italians to replace the strikers. In order to combat the growing militancy of Japanese plantation hands in Hawaii, growers imported Puerto Rican agricultural workers into the Pacific Islands.

Competition for scarce jobs often led to workers fighting among themselves. Fearful of losing their jobs due to the lack of steady employment in their industry, Irish construction workers refused to admit Jewish craftsmen into their unions. Unemployed workers in the California gold fields attacked and burned Chinese communities during a nation-wide depression. Skilled English and German ironworkers refused to support unskilled Hungarians and Slovaks in their efforts to obtain better conditions in the steel mills and iron furnaces of western Pennsylvania. Workingmen and the sons of workingmen served in the state militias and local police which shot down unarmed strikers in numerous towns and cities.

For every negative occurrence however, there are examples of workers from diverse backgrounds joining together in common cause. Blacks and Irish conducted a general strike in New Orleans in 1892 even when the Catholic church opposed the walkout. Striking Norwegians, Swedes, Italians and Slavs held an ill-fated Christmas party in Calumet, Michigan in 1913. Native-born, white sharecroppers and black sharecroppers broke long established Southern racial taboos by working together in the Populist Party in the late 1890's. Chinese and Hispanic factory operatives conducted a mass strike against employers in New York's garment district in 1982 in order to obtain a decent contract.

All of the incidents mentioned above, both the positive and the negative, constitute an integral part of the long and bitter effort of workers to obtain justice and equal treatment. Although they spoke different languages, attended different churches and had different color skins they shared similar dreams and desires. Whether they marched together in Labor Day parades or battled each other in city streets working people created a rich and valuable history that has often been ignored. This pamphlet represents one small effort to tell part of that story.

# The English

Many English settlers in the colonies in the 17th and 18th centuries came to America as indentured servants. These included shoplifters, burglars and pickpockets, driven to lawbreaking by the widespread unemployment and hunger prevalent in England. Others, especially children of the poor, were simply kidnapped off the streets, shipped off to the New World, and sold to the highest bidder. Government officials sold political opponents of the king into servitude rather than incur the expense of executing them.

An observer of an arriving shipload described the condition of the unwilling immigrants: "Many dying, some deprived of their senses, young children lying entirely naked, whose parents had expired." Enterprising traders placed ads in local newspapers: "Just arrived from London a parcel of young, likely men-servants, shoemakers, smiths, brickmakers . . . to be sold very reasonable." Those not sold immediately were herded into the back country by "Soul Drivers" who put them up for auction at county fairs.

Unlike slaves, these "indentured servants" as they were called, were sold to their masters for a limited time period — usually for seven or ten years. At the end of that period, the servant was freed, sometimes with a small sum of money, often with nothing. During the time of their servitude, these English immigrants worked hard, many died before their time was up. They worked on large southern plantations until African slaves displaced them by the end of the 17th century. Indentured servants labored on New England farms and in workshops located in seaport towns.

Servants belonged to their masters. They could be lost in a card game or seized as property to pay off the master's debt. Servants had to obtain their master's permission to marry; pregnancy might be punished with additional years of unpaid labor. Whippings and brandings were common, complaints often resulted in disaster. Although servants had a legal right to take their masters to court, the outcome was often worse than the complaint which occasioned it. In 1663 for example, six Maryland servants went on strike, claiming that their master had not given them enough to eat. "Wee desire but soe much as is sufficient, but hee will allow us nothing but Beans and Bread." Instead of requiring the planter to provide his servants with more food, the court found the servants guilty of conspiracy and ordered them to receive thirty lashes apiece.

As the colonies developed manufacturing — shipbuilding, brewing, barrel making, flour milling, tanning, iron work — wage labor became cheaper for the employer than indentured servitude or slave labor. More and more English men and women of "mean condition" came to the colonies to work for wages.

Pegging boots by hand

Although laborers and "gentlemen" shared a common language and historical tradition dating back centuries, their class differences were more important than their cultural similarities. New England law followed old English law in its attitude toward working people. One law said: "We declare our utter detestation and dislike that men and women of mean condition should take upon themselves the garb of gentlemen."

By the time of the Revolutionary War, those whom the wealthy called "the rabble" had begun to organize themselves. They organized to prevent anyone from building barracks for British soldiers in Boston, they organized to oppose slavery and to oppose laws keeping down workers' wages, and they organized to keep American merchants from hoarding food to jack up prices during the Revoluntionary War.

The "mechanics," the servants and other working people could not count on the "gentlemen" of the American colonies to look after their rights and welfare, so they often took things into their own hands, in an ungentlemanly way. In Boston, hearing that one "eminent, wealthy, stingy merchant" was hoarding coffee, a hundred women marched on his warehouse, pushed him around until he gave up his keys, loaded the coffee into carts and drove away.

**Whipping Quakers in New England.**

## Religious Differences

Although most of the earliest English immigrants were Protestants (a small minority were Catholics seeking the freedom of worship prohibited in England), they were members of many sects. As worshippers in different churches and chapels, some of their families had been on opposite sides of the English Civil War of the mid-17th century. Many hated and feared each other — as

anti-Christs, infidels and heretics. Once in the colonies, however, these differences came to have less importance in the face of the hostility of the "gentlemen" and their laws.

## The American Revolution

Indentured servants won their freedom by joining the revolutionary army, as did slaves from some New England states. Although it was true that slavery was becoming a less profitable and therefore less widespread form of labor in the North, workers rightfully feared that slavery as an institution anywhere in America would serve to keep wages down.

The political influence of women rose during this time, as the economic importance of their labor increased. Their work in home industry, shops and fields provided the backbone for resisting the British blockade.

Much of what the mechanics won from the merchants and landowners in the heat of the Revolution, when their partnership against the British was needed, did not survive. Indentured servitude ended; the abolition of slavery in the northern states had begun. The new Constitution, however, implicitly supported slavery and remained silent on the rights of women. As a result, the institution of slavery rigidified and became even more profitable on southern cotton plantations. Women were thrust back into the dark ages of English common law: married women could not own property, sign contracts or bring suit in court — and the wages they earned belonged to their husbands.

As America was transformed into an increasingly industrialized manufacturing nation after the Revolutionary War, immigrants from other parts of the world came, as the early English had, to labor and to struggle for a decent life against those who saw them only as "hands," as labor to be bought as cheaply as possible. The White Anglo-Saxon Protestant "rabble," the mechanics who had already begun to learn the lessons of organization and political action, were able to make use of those lessons in the early factories of Paterson, New Jersey, Lynn, Massachusetts, and New York. They were to learn also that they had to unite with workers speaking different languages and living according to different cultural traditions if their efforts to improve their lives were to succeed.

# The Blacks

W. E. Clark, a black coal miner from Ohio, writing in 1893, compared the plight of black and white workers: "Methinks I see the negro rising like the white laborer out of the depths in which slavery left him . . . If we have been slaves, they have been slaves; if we have been beaten, they have been beaten, if we have of times been cruelly murdered they have also (been) without judge and jury. They have risen, we are rising."

Clark was only partially right. While other groups of workers had faced violence or discrimination, none of them had been enslaved for generation upon generation. The legacy of slavery played a major role in the relationship of black workers to their country and to other workers.

## Blacks as Indentured Servants

Blacks first arrived in the United States as indentured servants in the early 1600's. Having the same legal rights as white servants, many of them gained their freedom after serving their time. Their status in the colonies changed as the demand for agricultural labor in the South increased. Initially using enslaved Indians or poor whites to farm their property, landowners found they needed a more dependable, stable workforce. By the mid-17th century, laws were passed making slavery legal. Conditions in Africa at the time made it very easy to obtain the necessary slaves.

## West African Society

The west coast of Africa, the area from which most American slaves came, was broken up into a host of tribal societies. Many of them, such as the Dahomey, the Yoruba, and the Ashanti had complex economic and political systems, with extensive trading networks and large farms. Gold and iron mining had developed as early as the 14th century. This, in turn, led to the growth of simple manufacturing and the rise of craft guilds. According to one scholar, the most important people in Dahomean society were the skilled craftsmen.

At least part of this economic development was based on slavery. Tribes warring against one another enslaved defeated enemies, putting them to work on the large farms. Local rulers hired other tribes to raid villages so as to increase their own supplies of slaves. European explorers and traders, arriving in Africa in the 15th century, turned these practices to their own advantage. The Europeans encouraged tribal chiefs to continue the practice, giving them manufactured goods in return for their captives. As the demand for slaves grew, more and more Africans became engaged in the practice. This led to the collapse of traditional tribal economies, making them increasingly dependent on the Europeans.

## Slavery Takes Over in the South

Between 1680 and 1786 over 2 million slaves arrived in the western hemisphere. It has been estimated that an equal or greater number died in passage to America. A Protestant minister described the conditions aboard one of the slave ships:

> The slaves were all enclosed under grated hatchways between decks. The space was so low, that they sat between each other's legs, and stowed so close together that there was no possibility of their lying down, or at all changing position . . . They had been out but seventeen days, and they had thrown overboard no less than 57 who had died of dysentary and other complaints.

Most southern slaves labored on small or medium-sized farms rather than on the large plantations. Often working alongside their masters in the fields, these slaves did not have to deal with cruel overseers or drivers. The small farmers, however, often could not make ends meet. When times turned hard, slaves suffered greatly, often being sold off to meet the farmers' debts. The large plantations depended on the slaves for all their needs. In addition to working in the fields, slaves did the housework, took care of the master's children or were employed as carpenters, blacksmiths, masons or other skilled craftsmen. As industry developed in the early 19th century, slaves were sent to work in iron foundries, cotton mills and tobacco factories. On all levels the South became increasingly dependent on slave labor.

## Slavery in the North

Slavery also existed, to a lesser extent, in the northern colonies. Most slaves worked on small farms or in skilled trades such as baking, cabinet-making,

printing or maritime crafts. As early as the late 17th century, white workers voiced the fear that the work of slaves threatened their ability to earn a living. Slave labor had "Soe much impoverisht them, that they cannot by their Labours gett a Competency for the Maintenance of themselves and Family's." The opposition of northern workers led to the passage of many laws restricting the spread of slavery in the region. Another factor contributing to the decline of northern slavery was the fact that over 5,000 Blacks fought in the Revolutionary War on the side of the colonists. It became increasingly difficult for northerners to speak of "the rights of man" while slaves were fighting and dying in order to free the colonies from England. By the end of the 18th century all northern states had either banned slavery or had provided for its gradual elimination. It was estimated that there were only 36,000 slaves in the North by 1800, most of them living in New York and New Jersey.

## Competition with White Immigrant Workers

Freedom for the slaves brought a new set of problems. Although many of them were skilled craftsmen, competition from white workers forced them to find jobs as laborers, servants or seamen. Even in these occupations, free Blacks had to compete with recently-arrived Irish Immigrants. As one Black put it:

> These improverished and destitute beings — transported from the trans-Atlantic shores . . . are crowding themselves into every place of business and labor, and driving the poor colored American citizen out. All along the wharves, where the colored man once done the whole business of shipping and unshipping — in stores where his services were once rendered, and in families where the chief places were filled by him, in all these situations there are substituted foreigners or white Americans.

Competition for scarce jobs often resulted in riots, strikebreaking and bloodshed. Mobs attacked black workers in Philadelphia and Columbia, Pennsylvania in 1842 while whites battled black strikebreakers on the New York docks. In 1853, armed Blacks took the place of striking Irish workers on the Erie Railroad while white coal miners attacked nearby black miners in Pennsylvania in 1842. During the same period, however, other black and white workers fought together to protect their jobs. White carpenters and ship caulkers joined black caulkers in a strike at the Washington Navy Yard in 1835. Black workers supported the citywide general strike in Philadelphia in that same year. A national organization of workers, the Industrial Congress, admit-

ted black delegates to its meetings. Irish hotel waiters joined with their black counterparts to demand higher wages in New York City in the mid-1800's.

## Conditions in the South

Unlike free citizens in the North, slaves could not go on strike or move away to find better jobs. Resistance to slavery took many forms. Revolts, such as those of Denmark Vesey or Nat Turner were brutally crushed. Other slaves resorted to sabatoging operations on the plantations or worked at a deliberately slow pace to foul up production. Another form of resistance was running away. Thousands of slaves risked their lives to reach freedom, receiving help along the way from Blacks and sympathetic whites. *Follow the Drinking Gourd*, a contemporary song provided fleeing slaves with a musical roadmap of the way North:

Follow the Drinking Gourd

When the sun comes up and the first quail calls
Follow the drinking gourd
For the old man is awaitin' for to carry you to freedom
Follow the drinking gourd.

Chorus:
Follow the drinking gourd
Follow the drinking gourd
For the old man is awaitin' for to carry you to freedom
Follow the drinking gourd.

Now the river bank will make a mighty fine road
The dead trees will show you the way

Left foot, peg foot travellin' on
Follow the drinking gourd.

Now the river ends between two hills
Follow the drinking gourd
There's another river on the other side
Follow the drinking gourd.

Most slaves, however, did not run away. They managed to survive, living as best they could. The Civil War finally put an end to slavery, opening up a new chapter in the story of black workers in the United States.

## After the Civil War

The end of the Civil War brought a new set of problems for both southern and northern Blacks. Excluded from most skilled trades, increasing numbers of northern Blacks turned to trade unionism to gain better wages and working conditions. While some southern Blacks worked in industry, most remained on the land as sharecroppers and tenant farmers or as agricultural laborers. They faced a hostile white population, embittered by its defeat in the recent war. Attempts by southern Blacks to improve their economic conditions often resulted in violence and bloodshed.

While northern Blacks enthusiastically supported trade unionism, white workers in craft unions were reluctant to have Blacks join their organizations. As a result, a number of all-black unions came into existence, joining together to form the Colored National Labor Union (CNLU) in 1869. Its president, Isaac Myers, made it clear that segregated unionism was not his preference:

"Labor organization is the safeguard of the colored man. But for real success separate organization is not the real answer. The white and colored mechanics must come together and work together . . . The day has passed for the establishment of organizations based upon color."

## Black and White Brickmakers Strike for Higher Wages

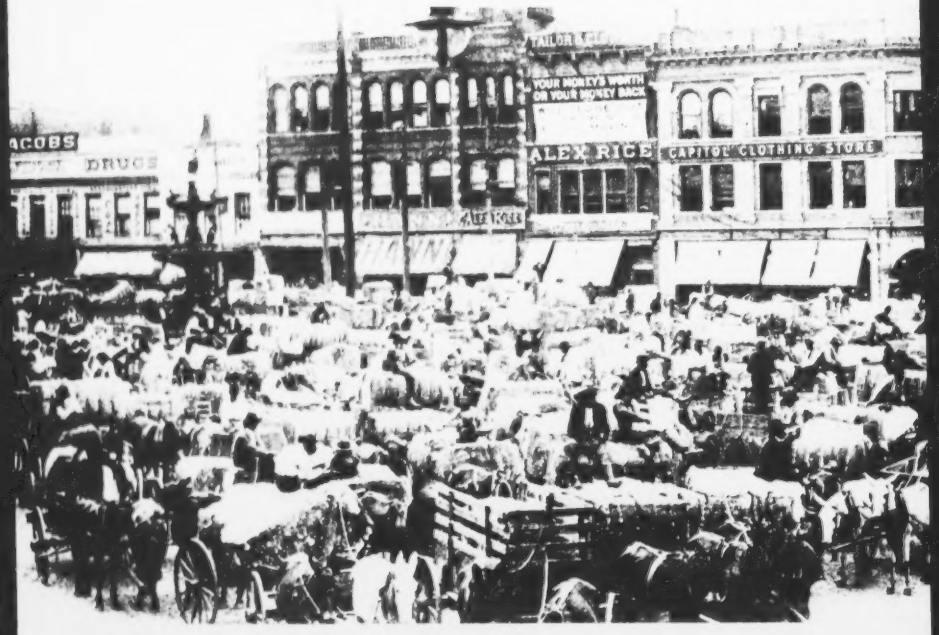
Successful attempts were made, both in North and South, to overcome existing racial barriers. Black and white brickmakers jointly went on strike for higher wages in Philadelphia in 1868. The Federation of Dockworkers in Savannah, New Orleans and Galveston admitted white and black longshoremen on equal terms. The Knights of Labor District Assembly 78 in Fort Worth, Texas held an annual march and picnic where whites, blacks and Mexicans marched together side by side. In the late 1800's no union made stronger efforts to organize black workers than the United Mine Workers of America.

Richard Davis, an organizer and member of the Union's executive board travelled throughout the coalfields, preaching the gospel of interracial trade unionism.

> Of workingmen in this country we have two races — the white and the black. Of the two the Negro constitutes a small minority. Now I want to know how can he separate himself from the white laborer and live? I am sure that you have intelligence enough to know that an employer of labor cares not what the color of a man's skin may be; he will employ the fellow who will work the cheapest . . . The United Mine Workers seek to better the conditions of the miners, be they white or black; we seek to place all men on a common level.

By 1900 Blacks constituted over 20% of the total membership of the UMWA. Many locals elected black officials. Other unions such as the International Longshoremen's Association encouraged Blacks to take leadership in their organization. As one official put it, "In one of our locals . . . there are over 300 members of which five are colored; of these, two hold the office of President and Secretary." The UMWA and the ILA however, were exceptions; most American Federation of Labor craft unions refused to accept Blacks as members.

Approximately 60% of black Americans lived in the South up to the beginning of the 20th century. While some former slaves had acquired small pieces of property after the Civil War, most worked as sharecroppers or laborers or lived as tenants on large landholdings owned by whites. Perpetually in debt, often being cheated by landowners and local merchants, many southern Blacks found themselves living on the edge of starvation. Their ability to survive depended on the price of cotton, the region's major cash crop. Any drop in cotton prices spelled disaster for both blacks and poor whites.




## Jim Crow Laws Keep Blacks and Whites Separate

Attempts to organize to improve conditions evoked violent responses from landlords and their allies. Laborers on sugar plantations in southern Louisiana went on strike for higher wages in 1880. Although the strikers were peaceful, the state militia arrested 12 people. Seventy-two of the strikers (60 of whom were Black) walked from their cabins to the parish jail under the leadership of the Knights of Labor. On November 22, a group of citizens overtook the lone group of strikers, killing at least 30. Similar acts of violence occurred across the South during the 1890s as white and Black farmers came together in the Populist Party to fight for better economic conditions. White planters and businessmen used violence to divide the movement by reminding poor whites that it could keep Blacks and whites separate.

The implementation of Jim Crow laws, enforced with violence in the South, convinced many Blacks to seek a better life. The start of World War I opened up large numbers of factory jobs in the East and Midwest. Black and white labor recruiters from steel companies and railroads traveled all throughout the South offering free transportation and higher wages to anyone willing to go North.

Between 1910 and 1920 over 1,200,000 African Blacks moved permanent

residence in the North. While many of them had good jobs during the war years, they were very hard hit by the industrial depression which occurred in the early 1920's. Throughout the decade, black workers found it harder and harder to get decent paying jobs, suffering consistently higher rates of unemployment than whites. The Great Depression, which began in 1929, hit Blacks especially hard. The AFL did little enough to protect the jobs of white workers; they did almost nothing for Blacks.

## The CIO and Black Workers

The formation of the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) in 1935, had a real impact on the condition of black workers. Unlike the AFL, the CIO unions organized both skilled and unskilled workers, regardless of race. The founders of the CIO realized that the organization could only succeed if black workers supported it. It officially banned any racial discrimination within its member unions.

Hundreds of thousands of black workers, with the encouragement of the NAACP, the National Negro Congress and the Urban League flocked into CIO unions. By 1949 over 500,000 Blacks had joined the labor movement, many of them becoming leaders within their unions.

Black workers have had mixed experiences since the Second World War. The major wage gains made by unionized workers have been offset in many cases by continued racial discrimination both at the workplace and within their unions. While some unions, such as the Automobile Workers, the Hospital Workers, the Meat Cutters and AFSCME actively fought against discrimination, other unions continued to exclude Blacks.

## Unionism: The Key to Battling Poverty

Even with these shortcomings, black leaders such as Martin Luther King, recognized that the labor movement remained one of the most important forces in the struggle to achieve economic and social equality. King was assassinated in Memphis, Tennessee, in 1968 while supporting the efforts of the city's sanitation men to gain a union contract. In one of his last public statements before his death, King affirmed his belief in the importance of trade unions for both blacks and whites. "The key to battling poverty is winning jobs for workers with decent pay through unionism."

The 40,000 blacks and whites, many of them representing unions across the country, who marched in his funeral procession were an eloquent, if tragic, reaffirmation of his vision. Even with its limitations, many black workers today, continue to see the union movement, as one way to achieve economic and social justice in the United States.

# The Irish

An English bishop visiting Ireland in the late 18th century observed that Irish peasants were "more destitute than savages." Between 1815 and 1854 over two million people left Ireland for America. Another million and a half died of disease or starvation. Although the lot of the Irish had always been hard, the failure of the potato crop in the mid 1840's proved to be an unparalleled disaster.

Most Irish depended on potatoes both as a cash crop and a source of food. The English, who had ruled Ireland with an iron hand since the mid-1600's, had prevented the development of industry which might compete with their own manufacturing. They had deprived Catholics of all civil, religious and political rights and had given most of the land to absentee landlords. The landholders gave Catholics tiny plots of land to farm at high rents. During the 1800's they began to evict these peasants, tearing down their homes in order to establish more profitable commercial farms. A blight destroyed the potato crop in 1846. Unable to pay their rent and faced with starvation many Irish had only one choice — immigration.

In some cases landlords loaded their former tenants onto boats or at least paid for their passage. They found it cheaper to get rid of them than to feed them. Other Irish sold what few possessions they had in order to raise the fare, arriving in America with little more than the clothes on their backs. Most would-be immigrants depended on money sent from friends or relatives already living in the United States. Even though they often had the lowest paying jobs, the Irish developed a reputation for sending a large part of their earnings back home.

Conditions on the immigrant ships were appalling. Squeezed into tiny ships, without adequate food or water, many died in mid-passage. During an eight-week trip on one ship, forty-two of two hundred and seventy-six passengers died. At one point forty ships were stretched out over a distance of two miles waiting to land their human cargo. The ships were held in quarantine because many of the immigrants were sick. One ship, the *Agnes*, was kept in quarantine for fifteen days. When the ship finally docked, only one hundred and fifty passengers out of a total of four hundred and twenty-seven remained alive.

The immigrants arrived in the United States during a period of rapid economic growth. Having few skills the Irish found work as laborers or factory

hands, doing the hardest, dirtiest, most dangerous work. "Irishmen could be found digging a canal from the Mississippi to Lake Ponchartrain, laying down a railroad, making dams to provide water power for the early textile towns of New England . . . or working in the glass industry." They worked as teamsters, porters, maids and shoemakers. Often earning no more than 62 cents a day, they worked under terrible conditions returning to their families, "with ruined constitutions, with a sorry pittance, most labouriously earned, and take to their beds sick and unable to work."

Southern plantation owners preferred to use the Irish rather than their slaves for clearing land or hauling cotton. A slave represented a large financial investment. A riverboat captain put it this way: "If the Paddies are knocked overboad or get their backs broken, nobody loses anything."

Irish immigrants faced equally bad conditions off the job. Living in the worst sections of the cities and towns they were blamed by newspapers and civic leaders for all sorts of social problems from crime to cholera epidemics. Many businesses offering work posted signs stating that "No Irish Need Apply." Immigrants expressed their resentment in a popular song:

No Irish Need Apply

I'm a decent boy just landed
From the town of Balyfad,
I want a situation
And I want it very bad.

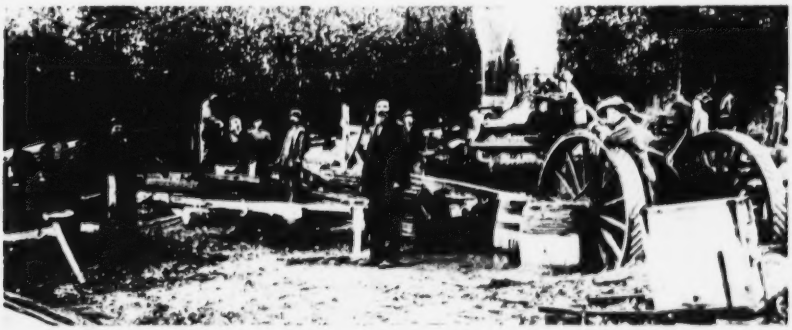
I have seen employment advertised
Tis just the thing, says I,
But the dirty spalpeen ended with
"No Irish need apply."

"Whoo!" says I "but that's an insult,
Tho to get the place I'll try."
So I went to see this black guard
With his "No Irish need apply."

Refrain:
Some do count it a misfortune
To be christened Pat or Dan,
But to me it is an honor
To be born an Irishman.

Ambitious politicians often ran for office promising to stop the flood of immigrants from Ireland and to deprive those already in the United States of

the right to vote. The Irish responded by developing a separate community life with the Catholic Church as its focal point. The clergy helped establish a host of benefit societies and immigrant aid societies to help newcomers get settled. Democratic politicians looking to build a political base in the cities actively recruited the Irish. They accused the other parties of favoring the rich over working people. This had great appeal to most Irish workers.



## Irish and Other Immigrants

The Irish had mixed relationships with other groups of workers. In 1835 they joined native-born Americans in Philadelphia to carry out the first general strike in American history. Nine years later, however, Catholic and Protestant workingmen battled in the same streets during a severe economic depression. Employers often instigated such conflicts, hoping to use them to drive down wages or increase the hours of work. During an 1846 strike of Irish laborers in New York, contractors used recently-arrived German immigrants to break the walkout, relying on troops to protect the strikebreakers. In other instances employers used the Irish to break strikes as well.

The sharpest conflicts often occurred between the Irish and black Americans. Occupying the bottom rungs of the economic ladder, these two groups often found themselves competing for the same jobs. Supporters of slavery enlisted the support of the Irish by claiming that freed slaves would leave the South to take the jobs of northern workers. During the Civil War, some Irish in New York rioted against recent draft legislation, and attacked local Blacks and their families, and burned down an orphanage for black children. Other Irish, remembering their own history of discrimination and mistreatment actively opposed slavery. In 1841 an abolitionist asked a meeting of Irish workers if they would turn in fugitive slaves. "Will you ever return to his master the slave who once sets foot on the soil of Massachusetts? (No! No! No!) Will you ever raise to

office or power the man who will not pledge his effort against slavery? (No! No! No!)"

The New Orleans General Strike of 1892 presents an even clearer example of workers struggling together for a common goal. Irish workers joined with Blacks in a strike for a ten hour day, overtime pay and the preferential hiring of union members. Over 25,000 workers from 49 different unions joined in the effort, shutting down the city for four days. "There is no newspaper to be printed, no gas or electric light in the city, no wagons, no carpenters, painters, or in fact, any business doing . . ." Newspapers tried to divide the workers by claiming that Blacks planned to take over the city or that they had threatened white women and children. Clergymen and Democratic politicians appealed to the Irish to desert their fellow black workers. All these efforts failed. The workers stood together, refusing to be diverted from their goal. In the end they won most of their demands.

The example of the unity forged in the New Orleans strike, and the role played by Irish leadership, was repeated often during the industrial union organizing drives of the 1930's. There also remained however, many areas of work in which ethnic groups were easily set against one another.

# The Scandinavians

In the middle of the 19th century a wave of immigrants came to the middle western states from the Scandinavian countries. Called "dumb Swedes," "herring chokers," satirized as strong, but stupid, these immigrants came out of the same desperate need to find land and work as their English, Scottish and Irish predecessors. The Scandinavian countries of Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland had experienced an enormous population explosion during the first part of the 19th century. Lagging behind the other European countries in the development of industry, these nations were economically dependent upon farming, fishing and lumbering. The fertile valleys of Scandinavia are divided by mountain ranges and deep fiords; much of the land lies above the Arctic Circle. As their population grew, the Scandinavian countries found themselves with more and more people living on a limited amount of useable land. Periodic crop failure forced many farmers into debt, so they could not pass on the land they had to their children. Faced with starvation, emigration to America became an attractive proposition.

## Railroads Recruit Immigrants

American railroad companies held large tracts of land from the federal government and stood to make an enormous profit from the sale of that land to immigrant farmers. The Burlington Railroad Company spent over $900,000 to convince Scandinavians that they should emigrate from their homeland and settle on the Burlington's western landholdings. Representatives from Norwegian steamship companies travelled to mountain villages and isolated seacoast towns, hoping to recruit passengers for their half-empty ships. State and local governments in the United States joined in the effort, seeking to bring the Norwegians and Swedes into their unsettled territories.

The Scandinavian immigrants came to America seeking land. Many settled on small farms in the northern tier of mid-western states: Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin. A popular song satirized the experiences of Norwegian immigrants in their new homeland:

Oleanna

Oh to be in Oleanna
That's where I'd like to be
Then be bound in Norway
And drag the chains of slavery.

Ole, Ole, anna, Ole, Ole, anna.
Ole, Ole, Ole, Ole, Ole, Ole, anna.

In Oleanna land is free
The wheat and corn just plant themselves.
Then grow a good four feet a day,
While on your bed you rest yourself.

Little roasted piggies
Rush about the city streets,
Inquiring so politely
If a slice of ham you'd like to eat.

## Union Organizing in the Copper Mines

Others did not have enough money to buy a farm and went to work in the mills, mines and lumber camps, hoping to accumulate enough savings to buy land. After the Civil War, Scandinavians participated with other workers in the efforts to unionize the lumberjacks, farm laborers and miners of the upper Midwest and Northwest. One of the America's most famous union organizers was the Swedish-born Joel Hagglund, known as Joe Hill. Arriving in America in 1902, he spent the next ten years working in the copper mines. He joined the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW or "Wobblies") in 1910 and soon became known as an organizer and a song writer. One of Joe Hill's most famous songs is:

The Preacher and the Slave

Long haired preachers come out
every night
Try to tell you what's wrong
and what's right
But when asked about
something to eat,
They will answer with voices so sweet:

You will eat by and by,
In that glorious land above the sky.
Work and pray, live on hay
You'll get pie in the sky when you die.

In early 1914 Joe Hill was arrested for the murder of a Salt Lake City grocer. Although his guilt was never proven, a court condemned him to death and he was executed.

## A Christmas Tragedy

In the copper mines of Michigan and Minnesota, Norwegian, Swedes and Finns joined with Irish, Slavic, Italian and native-born workers to protest wage cuts and extension of hours. In December, 1913, 15,000 miners struck the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company of Calumet, Michigan. At the time, most miners made a dollar a day or less, while company stockholders received a 400 percent increase in their dividends. To lift the strikers' spirits, strike leaders organized a Christmas party for the miners' children. Outside the house where the party was being held, scabs and supervisors employed by the copper company started a panic by hollering "fire," and barring the exit doors. Frightened, the children rushed to the locked doors and in the hysteria, 72 children were trampled and smothered to death.

## The 1930's

By the 1930's the Scandinavians were less identifiable as an immigrant group, and took their place with the other immigrant and native-born Americans in the struggles of that period. As founders and participants of the Non-Partisan League in Wisconsin and the Minnesota Farm-Labor Party, they pressed for legislation to limit the power of the banks and railroads in the American economy and for pro-labor and pro-farmer laws and regulations. As auto workers and miners they participated in the CIO organizing drives during the Depression, and took the lead in organizing farmers to resist foreclosures and evictions.

# The Chinese

To the first Chinese immigrants arriving in California in the 1850's, America was "Gum San," the "Land of the Golden Mountain." Few of them planned to stay in America long. They intended to return to China as soon as they accumulated enough money to buy some land at home. These early immigrants dug for gold or worked as cooks, launderers or storekeepers. Employers welcomed these laborers with open arms, viewing them as a source of cheap, docile labor.

For centuries, China had one of the most advanced civilizations in the world. By the mid-nineteenth century however, internal conflicts and wars had seriously weakened its economy and government. Its port cities experienced massive unemployment after China's defeat by England in a war in 1842. A serious crop failure from 1847 to 1850 created widespread starvation in rural districts. Thousands were forced to flee after an unsuccessful revolt against the ruling Manchu dynasty. Immigration proved relatively easy. Ships returning to the United States after delivering cargo to China charged the would-be immigrants approximately $15, three to five times less the amount charged most European immigrants.

## Anti-Chinese Sentiment

The bulk of the Chinese headed for the gold fields upon arriving in California. As the fields petered out and more Chinese continued to arrive, resentment among non-Chinese workers grew. Signs similar to the one below began to appear in mining camps thoughout the state.

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN TO ALL
CHINESE ON THE AGNA FRIA AND
ITS TRIBUTARIES TO LEAVE WITHIN
10 DAYS, FROM THIS DATE, AND
ANY FAILING TO COMPLY SHALL
BE SUBJECTED TO 30 LASHES
AND MOVED BY THE FORCE OF ARMS.

Laws were passed excluding the Chinese from mining, fishing and other occupations. Courts barred them from testifying at trials and all arriving

immigrants had to pay an entry tax of $10. The funds derived from the tax went to state hospitals which the Chinese were not allowed to use.

Excluded from other trades, the Chinese went to work on the western branch of the Transcontinental railroad. Other groups of workers had found the work too difficult and dangerous. In order to lay tracks through the mountains, workers had to be lowered down cliff sides in buckets, cutting out a path with hammers and chisels. Endless human chains removed rocks from building sites in wicker baskets. They worked thoughout the winter, sometimes cutting tunnels beneath forty-foot high snowdrifts. Desperate for work, the Chinese proved to be tough and efficient. As the demand for their labor grew, the railroads began to directly recruit workers in China. These laborers had to sign notes which obligated them to pay the railroads $75 within seven months for their passage to America.

CENTRAL PACIFIC RAILROAD—CHINESE LABORERS AT WORK.

## Hard Times and Anti-Chinese Riots

The completion of the railroad in 1869 threw ten thousand Chinese on the job market at the same time that thousands more immigrants were arriving each month. This flood of labor coincided with a severe economic depression. Politicians seeking the votes of workers blamed the Chinese for widespread unemployment. Labor unions joined the movement, calling for strict limi-

tations on further immigration. A song popular in San Francisco in 1877 reflected growing resentment towards the Chinese:

Twelve Hundred More

O workingmen dear,
  and did you hear
Another China steamer
Has been landed here in town.
Today I read the papers,
And it grieved my heart
  full sore
To see upon the title page,
O, just "Twelve Hundred More!"
O, California's coming down
As you can plainly see.
They hiring all the
  (Chinese)
And discharging you and me;
But strife will be in every town
Throughout the Pacific shore,
And the cry of old and young
  shall be,
"O damn 'Twelve Hundred More'."

A series of anti-Chinese riots swept the west coast. In November 1878, over a thousand Chinese were driven from the town of Truckee, California. Mobs burned Chinese businesses and openly attacked individuals on the street. Since most of the Chinese were single men, San Francisco officials passed an ordinance limiting the number of people who could live in boarding houses. They immediately arrested scores of Chinese workers. The jails were soon overflowing because the arrested men refused to pay the $10 fine. Officials retaliated by ordering that all newly jailed prisoners had to have all their hair cut off. One prisoner whose queue (traditional braid) had been cut off took the sheriff to court which ordered the lawman to stop the practice. Other persecuted Chinese took similar actions to protect their rights.

## The Chinese Exclusion Act

In 1883 the U.S. Congress passed the Exclusion Act which banned immigration from China to the United States (The Act was not repealed until 1943). Those Chinese who did not leave the U.S. retreated to the ghettos, pictures-

quely called Chinatowns. Chinese also found work on California's large commercial farms where they became the backbone of the labor force until they were chased from the fields in the mid-1890's.

When given the chance, the Chinese demonstrated a great willingness to join the labor movement even though the trade unions had strongly supported the Exclusion Act. Many of the immigrants had been involved in unions and strikes in China. J. W. Walsh, an organizer for the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) felt that: "They, (the Chinese) can be organized as rapidly, if not more so, than any other nationality on the earth." In the summer of 1912, the United Mine Workers, utilizing a Chinese organizer, unionized a group of Chinese coal miners on Vancouver Island, conducting a successful strike for higher wages. The Carpenters and Joiners Union local in Hawaii actively recruited Chinese workers while advocating the repeal of the Exclusion Act. Organizing drives took place in Chinese restaurants on the east coast and among miners in Wyoming. Chinese hop pickers in Kern County, California, organized a successful strike for higher wages in 1884. The action succeeded because Blacks brought in to break the strike refused to scab.

A spokesman for the American Labor Union observed that:

> A very short time ago, we refused to take Italians, the Scandinavians and the Russians into our unions, and we protested because they took our places when we went on strike, but now that circumstances have forced us to take them into our unions, we find them among the best union men and women on the continent, and I beleive that the same thing will apply to the Mongolian (Chinese) when we extend to him the right hand of fellowship and take him into the union as a fellow wage earner, who is being exploited the same as we are.

When two locals of Chinese workers in New York and two in Philadelphia applied to the Knights of Labor for a charter, the organization merged the two groups into existing locals rather than allow them to maintain their own district identity as they had other ethnic-based locals. The craft unions likewise refused to accept the Chinese on an equal basis. The rise of industrial unions in the 1930's and China's role as a wartime ally of the United States made it possible for more and more Chinese to join the labor movement and thereby achieve social and economic justice.

# The Jews

To the Jews of the Russian and Polish ghettoes at the end of the 19th century, America sounded like a land where the streets were paved with gold. However, few of the Jews coming to the United States during the late 19th and early 20th century found it to be so. They found overcrowded tenements, sweatshops, sixteen hour work days and widespread discrimination. Having been the victims of government persecution in their homelands, they now found themselves victimized by unscrupulous employers in America. Drawing upon a long tradition of resistance to all forms of injustice, they quickly became involved in the struggles of working people to obtain decent living and working conditions.

For most of their history, European Jews had been considered outsiders in the countries where they lived. In the main, Jews lived in the eastern European countries of Poland, Lithuania and Russia, Hungary and Romania. Most of them lived either in small towns and villages called *shtetls* or in the ghettos of larger cities. Set apart by religious and cultural traditions, not permitted to engage in agriculture or other occupations, Jews became convenient scapegoats during periods of economic or social unrest. Between 1825 and 1885 the Russian government, for example, passed over 600 anti-Jewish laws. Religious schools were closed, books were censored, and many Jews were forced to move from towns in which they had lived for generations. Government officials in Russia and Romania encouraged local peasants to attack Jewish communities. In April of 1903 a mob invaded the Jewish section of Kishinev killing 49 people and injuring over 500, while looting 700 homes and destroying 600 businesses. An army regiment stationed in the town did nothing to stop the mob. A similar attack occurred two years later resulting in the death of 19 people.

## Jews Face Emigration or Death

Prevented by law from owning land, Jews worked as artisans, factory hands, shopkeepers or traders, finding it increasingly difficult to make ends meet. In many communities nearly 50% of the Jews depended on some form of charity

for their survival. Resentment over poor living conditions and threats to their personal safety led many Jews to get involved in trade unionism and radical political activity. This, in turn, led to increased government persecution. It soon became clear to many Jews that they faced two options: "Either we get civil rights or we emigrate. Our human dignity is being tramped upon, our wives and daughters are being dishonored, we are looted and pillaged; either we get decent human rights or else let us go wherever our eyes may lead us."

Nearly one third of all eastern European Jews made the latter choice. Between 1901 and 1914, over 1,600,000 left for North or South America. Most of them spent time in England, Germany or Austria before leaving for America, in order to earn enough money for passage. Unlike other immigrant groups Jews tended to travel as families since they had no intention of returning to Poland or Russia. Those who travelled alone sent for their families as soon as they had earned enough money.

## Arriving in America

Upon arriving in America, most headed for larger cities such as New York, Philadelphia, Boston and Chicago, where friends or relatives had already settled. Having few industrial skills, many of them worked in traditional artisan trades such as painting, baking, tailoring, shoemaking or printing. Others found work as street vendors or peddlers. Native-born workers viewed Jews much as previous generations viewed Italians or the Irish and as subsequent generations were to view Blacks and Hispanics. They refused to admit them into existing trade unions, fearing the competition. A New York labor leader blamed the new immigrants for undercutting current wage rates: "The Jews have beaten down the earnings in several important branches of industry. There can be no doubt that they will ruin all American workers, men and women, if they are permitted to enter factories where native Americans are employed."

Ignorant of conditions in America and without the benefit of organized trade unions, Jews often found themselves being exploited or being used as strike-breakers. In June of 1882, a young man arrived at the Castle Garden immigration center, offering to hire newly arrived immigrants to unload steamships. After working a few days the Jews were beaten up by two Irishmen. The immigrants found out that they were being used as scabs. The next day they reported to work, demanded their full wages and then joined the strikers. A few days later over 500 Jewish immigrants marched in a parade with striking Irish dockworkers and their families.

## United Hebrew Trades

In order to protect themselves Jews formed their own trade unions and labor organizations. In 1888 the United Hebrew Trades (UHT) was organized. It consisted of unions of pants-makers, actors, typographers, cloakmakers, musicians and bookbinders. Within four years over 40 individual unions had been organized. The UHT played a crucial role in the formation of unions in the construction trade. Barred by the craft unions from being involved in new home construction, Jewish craftsmen moved into remodelling work, forming such unions as the Alteration Painter's Union, the Alteration Carpenter's Union and the Alteration Union of Electrical Workers. Within a few years the alteration workers had better conditions and higher wages than workers in new home construction. Eventually these Jewish locals were absorbed into the larger craft union.

Immigrant Jews had the greatest impact in the organization of the garment industry. Most clothing manufacturing was done in small sweatshops, where workers labored under terrible conditions. Working anywhere from 60 to 84 hours a week, employees often had to take garments home after they completed their time in the shops. Children as young as three years old worked with their mothers putting trimmings on women's dresses.

## The Triangle Shirtwaist Fire

The true horrors of the garment industry came into public view in March of 1911. Over 140 Jewish and Italian clothing workers burned to death in a fire at the Triangle Shirtwaist Company. The victims couldn't escape from the raging inferno because the bosses had locked exit doors to prevent employees from sneaking out on breaks. A United Press reporter observed: "The floods of water from the firemen's hoses that ran in the gutter were actually red with blood." On April 5th over 120,000 people from more than 60 trade unions marched in a mammoth funeral procession. As a result of the fire, the New York State legislature passed a sweeping series of protective labor laws.

The tragedy also gave renewed impetus to the efforts to organize unions in the garment industry. Jews played a key role in the organization of the industry, especially in the larger cities where they comprised a majority of the workforce. The union in the men's clothing industry, the Amalgamated Clothing Workers (ACWA), was organized in 1914 after a series of massive, brutal strikes. These walkouts created great anger and hostility since many of the clothing manufacturers were also Jews. Their lack of concern for their fellow Jews enraged many of the strikers.

## Model Industrial Unions

Both the ACWA and the ILGWU became model industrial unions, pioneering in cooperative housing programs, unemployment insurance and health care. The Amalgamated opened up a bank where a worker could get a loan without collateral. During the 1930's these unions took the lead in organizing the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), which extended union protection to millions of unskilled factory hands. As individual Jews moved out of the garment industry into other occupations they brought traditions of union organization and a concern for social justice with them. They played key roles in the expansion of such unions as the American Federation of Teachers, the Hospital Workers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME).

# The Italians

AMERICA! — The country where everyone could find work! Where wages were so high that nobody had to go hungry! Where all men were free and even the poor could own land!

For would-be immigrants, America represented a dream-like escape from the poverty and hopelessness prevalent throughout southern Italy. In the last part of the 19th century, Italy consisted of two separate nations. While the northern part was becoming a modern, industrial nation, the southern half remained a backwater of feudalism. Poverty and disease were widespread and in some areas 98% of the population could neither read nor write. To protect themselves from bandits and periodic epidemics, peasants crowded into large, hilltop villages, leaving them each day to work in the fields of the absentee landlords. Living in large cities far away from the estates, the landowners had only contempt for those who worked the land. The government showed little concern for the southerners, concentrating its energy on developing the north.

Italy experienced a tremendous growth in population in the late 1800's as did many other European countries. At the same time, the development of an American citrus industry and efforts by France to curtail imports of wine, all but destroyed major markets for Italian crops. Poverty increased dramatically and thousands of peasants came close to starvation. Resentment against the landlords grew, often breaking out in episodes of organized violence against the owners of the estates.

Although many of the peasants had never travelled beyond their own villages, hundreds of thousands of them decided to immigrate to America. From 1891 to 1910 over 3,000,000 Italians migrated to the United States. They arrived during a period of repeated economic depressions. They were able to find only low paying jobs, working on the docks, on construction projects and as general laborers.

## The "Padrone" System

One of the biggest problems for newly arrived Italians was the "padrone" system. The padrone originally started out, in the 1860's and 1870's as labor contractors. They recruited a specific number of workers for an American

employer, and provided the immigrants with transportation, a job, room and board. In return the workers, most of whom were single men, signed contracts binding them to the padrone for up to 7 years. Although later changes in the immigration laws made it unnecessary to sign such contracts, most immigrants relied on the padrone to get them started in America.

Many Italians came to the United States only to make some money, returning home when the work ran out. Others left because they could not find work. Between 1908 and 1910, for every 100 immigrants arriving in America, 44 returned to Europe.

Employers often came to the padroni when they were looking for strike-breakers. During a lockout of granite cutters in 1892-93 the padroni brought in Italians to take the jobs of union members. In the spring of 1874, they were used in a similar fashion to break a strike of New York construction workers. Later that same year, 3 Italians were killed and 8 were wounded in a gun battle with recently fired coal miners in western Pennsylvania. Incidents such as these turned many people against the Italians. Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries they became targets of mob violence. Lynchings took place in Louisiana, Mississippi, Florida and Illinois while some 200 were driven from their homes by an angry mob in Altoona, Pennsylvania. While some of these instances were related to labor conflicts most were not. Mistreatment of Italians continued after World War I. Hundreds were deported without fair trails, accused of being radicals and anti-American.

## Strikers and Strikebreakers

Although many Italians worked as strikebreakers when they first arrived in America, they tended to switch sides once they understood what the circumstances were. Along with Swedes, Germans and Blacks, Italians were brought into Mahoning Valley during a coal miners' strike. After talking to the striking miners, the Italians decided to join them. One striker remarked: "The Italians in this valley are as firm as a 'brick,' and are willing to stand for their rights as long as they can get anything to eat . . . The Italians told (the operators) . . . that they had blacklegged (scabbed) once, not understanding it, but they would not do so anymore."

On July 15, 1882, 250 Italians working as scabs during a strike of New York freight handlers marched out of the yards and down to the union office, demanding to be allowed to join the striking union. Similar incidents took place across the country. Many trade unions, concerned about protecting their members' jobs, refused to take in the immigrants as members. A group of Italian laborers wanted to join the Newark, New Jersey local of the Hod

Carriers and Building Laborers in 1904. When the union refused to admit them, they applied for a charter to establish their own local. Once again, the union turned them down. An Italian organizer bitterly criticized such actions:

> The Italians have been reviled as scabs without number. But there is a reason for this. Your delegates of unions and central labor bodies have never taken enough interest in the Italian to help him to organize. I want you to understand that these men are flesh and blood — are working men like the rest of you, and they are willing and anxious to stand together for a living wage.

Rejected by many of the traditional AFL craft unions, Italians turned to such groups as the IWW (Industrial Workers of the World). In Paterson, New Jersey and Lawrence, Massachusetts, both male and female Italian textile workers played major leadership roles in IWW strikes. Many of the workers in the mills were children. One of them, Camella Teoli, started working in the mills at age 13. Two weeks after she started her hair got caught in a machine, ripping off her scalp.

Such incidents were common among Italian immigrants. Forced to take low paying jobs, it became necesary for all members of the family to go to work. Unable to obtain an education, many Italians stayed in various kinds of unskilled work. Although increasing numbers of Italians went into business or the professions, many still earned their living as manual workers.

Italians today hold many key positions in the labor movement. In the construction trades they are often faced with the difficult problem of finding ways to protect the jobs of their members while guaranteeing that others gain equal access to employment. In service and industrial unions they have been among the leaders in the fight for better working conditions and in opposing all forms of discrimination. They remember all too well the struggles of their fathers and grandfathers to fulfill the dream that brought them to America.

# The Puerto Ricans

Writing in 1904, Ramon Romero Rosa, a printer and trade union leader, described the irony of life in Puerto Rico:

> As a people, Puerto Rico takes the prize for poverty. Poor in political rights — Poor in social rights — Poor in economic rights. Yet wealth is here . . . As a geological entity, Puerto Rico's wealth stands unrivalled. Rich in vegetation — Rich in natural products — Rich in the quality of its produce. Here is the contradiction between Man and Nature, between poverty and wealth, the contradiction created by the regime of human exploitation.

Centuries of neglect by Spanish landowners, private corporations and the United States government created harsh poverty in the midst of great natural beauty. In their efforts to escape that poverty, Puerto Rican workers organized trade unions or migrated to the U.S. mainland.

Puerto Rico was claimed for the Spanish crown by Christopher Columbus in 1493. This "rich port," as Columbus named it, remained a colonial backwater for 400 years. The island's sugar plantations and gold mines could not compete with those found in Mexico, Peru or the West Indies. Spain used Puerto Rico, mainly as a military base to protect its convoys travelling to and from more profitable sections of Latin America. Some African slaves were imported to the island, and together with the Indian population and the Spanish landowners, formed the mix of people now known as Puerto Ricans.

An increase in the world wide demand for sugar in the 19th century led to the expansion of the sugar industry in Puerto Rico. The growing and processing of sugar cane was carried out on hundreds of estates or "haciendas." Controlled by local Spanish families, they closely resembled the cotton plantations of the American south. Farm workers, while not legally slaves, were treated little better. In addition to working on the haciendas, large numbers of Puerto Ricans labored in the tobacco industry or on coffee plantations. A small number found work as artisans in the cities and major towns. Tobacco workers and urban craftsmen took the lead in organizing trade unions.

## Independence from Spain: A Colony of the U.S.

Workers in the tobacco industry and on the coffee plantations played a major role in the struggle to obtain political independence at the end of the 19th century. When the United States defeated Spain in the Spanish-American War, peoples' hopes for economic and political democracy were raised. Their dreams were crushed when the United States formally annexed the island in 1898. Eugenio Maria de Hostos, a leader of the independence movement, expressed his bitterness:

> I thought how noble it would have been to see her free by her own effort, and how sad and overwhelming and shameful it is to see her (Puerto Rico) go from owner to owner without ever being her own master, and to see her pass from sovereignty to sovereignty without ever ruling herself.

In the wake of annexation, U.S. investors flocked to the island, reviving the dying sugar industry. They bought up the haciendas, setting up large farms around huge grinding mills or "centrales." The living and working conditions of sugar workers rapidly deteriorated. They labored 12-14 hours a day, earning between 35 cents and 60 cents a day. The seasonal nature of sugar production left employees with no work or wages for up to 6 months a year. The manufacturers forced workers to live in company houses and to buy food from company stores. They also outlawed all labor agitation and political activity.

Sugar workers responded to these harsh conditions by periodically engaging in violent strikes. In March, 1915, nearly 80% of the agricultural laborers in the southern part of the island walked off their jobs. The newspaper *Conciencia Popular* described what happened at a meeting of striking workers in Ponce:

> At 8:00 p.m., to the hum of many voices, the platform . . . was set up. More than two thousand workers crowded in front of it . . . On the four street corners were posted some gendarmes who kept glancing at each other and mumbling . . . The speaker was attacking the police for its inability to be impartial since it had its headquarters in the plantations and was their loyal defender . . . Through all of this there was absolute quiet, finally interrupted by an alcoholic cry of 'That's enough!' The police raised their rifles, there was a loud detonation and a hail of hot lead fell into the crowd which fled in terror. More volleys followed as people ran in great confusion . . . On the next street a man threw himself toward the doors of the Circaciana Inn and a mounted policeman, one of the day's valiant heroes, shot him down as he cried

out. 'For God's sake don't finish me off, don't you see I'm wounded?'

## U.S. Rule Undermines Puerto Rican Labor

United States officials consistently supported the efforts of employers and local officials to suppress strikes and political activity. Santiago Inglesias and other labor leaders appealed to the American Federation of Labor (AFL) for support. The AFL provided thousands of dollars in strike relief and hired local union organizers. Although the mainland labor organization supported legislation to improve the rights of Puerto Rican workers, the AFL opposed all calls for independence.

During the latter part of the 1930's, the rise of an aggressive new labor movement and the institution of a number of New Deal type programs brought some improvements for Puerto Rican workers. The Confederation General de Travajadores (CGT) organized thousands of urban and rural workers into unions. Aligned with the mainland Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO), the CGT also pushed for increased political rights while carrying out many bitter and violent walk-outs.

## U.S. Government Encourages Industry Eliminating Minimum Wage

In order to encourage U.S. industry to invest in Puerto Rico, the U.S. government offered mainland companies buildings and training programs for workers while eliminating all corporate taxes. Workers in Puerto Rico no longer had to be paid the minimum wage. Unions were placed under pressure to adopt a more "friendly" attitude toward employers. U.S. companies reaped huge profits from their Puerto Rican investments; Puerto Rican workers suffered from very low wages and poor working conditions. In 1950, mainland workers earned an average of $1.44 per hour; in Puerto Rico, factory workers earned an average of 42 cents per hour.

Low wages and poor living conditions pushed many Puerto Ricans to leave home and migrate to New York, Philadelphia and Chicago. Although small numbers had moved to the mainland before World War II, after 1945 the migration increased to close to 40,000 a year. By the 1970's, one third of all Puerto Ricans lived on the mainland.

## Citizenship No Protection for Puerto Rican Workers

Although the migrants were full U.S. citizens, they experienced the same difficulties as earlier immigrant groups. They were forced to crowd into run-down tenements, recently vacated by the families of Jewish and Italian immigrants. Coming with few industrial skills, most Puerto Ricans first found work as factory operatives or in service trades. The low wages and poor working conditions of these industries quickly convinced them of the need to organize. Although they left Puerto Rico with a strong tradition of trade unionism, they faced many obstacles when they participated in labor affairs in northern cities. Many building trade unions refused to accept the new arrivals as members. Puerto Ricans in New York City found themselves in a number of industries where some unions had been infiltrated by gangsters. Appeals for help to the AFL-CIO contributed to the expulsion of many of the corrupt locals.

In other industries and other cities, Puerto Rican migrants played important roles in union affairs. In the Midwest, Puerto Ricans made a major contribution to the auto and steel workers unions. Municipal and service unions such as AFSCME and Hospital Workers Union 1199, have a large Puerto Rican membership and significant participation in union leadership. However, as the "last of the immigrants," Puerto Ricans remain at the bottom of the American economic ladder. With the shift of the economy away from manufacturing and unskilled labor, Puerto Ricans suffer higher rates of unemployment than many other ethnic groups. While some of the migrants return home to unemployment and low wages, most remain, refusing to give up hope of a better life for themselves and their children.

# Conclusion

During a 1917 campaign to organize workers in the Chicago stockyards John Kikulski, a Pole, and J. W. Johnstone, a Black, jointly urged their fellow workers to set aside their differences in order to build a strong, unified labor movement. Johnstone observed: "It does me good . . . to see such a checkerboard crowd. You are standing shoulder to shoulder as men, regardless of whether your face is black or white." Kikulski echoed Johnstone's sentiments. "While there will be varied differences in our physical makeup and thoughts . . . there is one thing we hold in common, and that is our right to a living wage, and our rights in pursuit of happiness as American citizens."

The task undertaken by Kikulski and Johnstone proved difficult to achieve. All too often workers allowed suspicion or prejudice to interfere with their ability to fight together to obtain a better life for themselves and their families. Employers took advantage of their fear or ignorance to pit one group of wage-earners against another in order to keep the workforce weak and divided.

At the same time, however, working men and women repeatedly found ways to bridge the gaps that separated them in order to fight for better conditions in the workplace. Whether they came in chains from Dahomey, by boat from Riga, in planes from Hong Kong or by foot from Guadalahara they hoped to create a better future for their children and their grandchildren. They left behind a history of joy and sorrow, of triumph and tragedy, of heroism and cowardice. Most of all, they left behind a heritage of struggle, a legacy that future generations should remember and cherish.

# Significant Dates in Labor's Heritage of Struggle

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| 1619 | First shipload of black slaves reach America |
| 1620 | Voyage of the Mayflower |
| 1648 | Boston Coopers and Shoemakers Guilds founded |
| 1654 | First Jewish immigrants to reach America arrive at New Amsterdam |
| 1683 | First German settlers to reach New World arrive in Pennsylvania |
| 1697 | Royal African Company's monopoly ended; slave trade expands |
| 1709 | Exodus from German Palatinate begins |
| 1717 | Transportation of felons to American colonies authorized by Parliament |
| 1718 | Parliament prohibits emigration of skilled artisans |
| 1730 | Colonization of the southern back-country by German and Scotch-Irish from Pennsylvania begins |
| 1732 | *Philadelphische Zeitung*, first German-language newspaper published in America |
| 1740 | Parliament enacts Naturalization Act conferring British citizenship upon alien immigrants to colonies |
| 1741 | N.Y. master bakers' strike against municipal regulations of the price of bread |
| 1775 | British government suspends emigration upon outbreak of hostilities in America |
| 1778 | Successful strike of journeymen printers, New York City |
| 1791 | Black revolt in Santo Domingo |
| 1791 | Philadelphia carpenters' strike for 10-hour day — lost |
| 1792 | Philadelphia shoemakers' first trade union organization for one year |
| 1798 | Unsuccessful Irish rebellion |
| 1805 | First known strike fund — New York shoemakers |
| 1806-19 | Six conspiracy cases, masters financed, union wins one, compromises one, union declared conspiracy in others |
| 1807 | Congress prohibits importation of black slaves into United States |
| 1824 | First women's strike, Pawtucket, R.I., weavers against wage cut |
| 1825 | Arrival in United States of first group of Norwegian immigrants in sloop *Restaurationen* |

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| 1825 | Boston carpenters' strike for 10-hour day |
| 1827 | First city-central: Philadelphia mechanics' union of trade associations |
| 1828 | First workingmen's labor party, Philadelphia |
| 1830 | N.Y., Boston and state-wide labor parties |
| 1831 | Slave insurrection in Virginia led by Nat Turner |
| 1832 | Free public schools, mechanics' lien law and end of imprisonment for debt in N.Y., achieved through labor's political action |
| 1833 | Female Society of Lynn, Mass., woman shoe binders |
| 1834 | First daily labor press |
| 1834-37 | National Trades' Union in 6 cities — first National Labor Federation — 10-hour agitation |
| 1837 | Financial panic in United States |
| 1838 | Irish Poor Law Act |
| 1842 | Commonwealth vs. Hunt — unions and peaceful strike for closed shop allowed |
| 1844 | Anti-Catholic riots in Philadelphia |
| 1845-49 | Irish potato famine |
| 1846 | Crop failures in Germany and Holland |
| 1848 | Revolution in Germany |
| 1848 | Taiping rebellion in southeast China |
| 1852 | Typographical Union founded — the earliest national union to remain in permanent existence |
| 1854-56 | Know-Nothing Movement at its height |
| 1855 | Opening of Castle Garden immigrant depot |
| 1857 | American financial panic |
| 1860 | Successful strike of some 20,000 New England shoemakers |
| 1861-65 | American Civil War |
| 1863 | New York draft riots |
| 1863 | Slavery emancipation |
| 1864 | Congress legalizes contract labor |
| 1866-71 | National Labor Union — Federation of nationals, city centrals, locals — President William Sylvis; 8-hour movement |
| 1869 | Knights of Labor formed |
| 1871-85 | Molly Maguire conflicts in Pennsylvania coalfields |
| 1877 | Railroad strikes, New York to San Francisco (NYC, Erie lines) |
| 1879 | Renewed famine in Ireland |
| 1881 | Federation of organized trade and labor unions of United States and Canada |
| 1882 | First Labor Day celebration New York City, on initiative of P.J. McGuire, Carpenters' leader |
| 1882 | First federal immigration law |

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| 1885 | Foran Act prohibits importation of contract labor |
| 1885 | RR (Gould) strikes of Knights of Labor won over 10% cut |
| 1886 | Statue of Liberty dedicated |
| 1886 | Haymarket bombing. Parsons. and others executed |
| 1886 | Membership. K of L 700,000; others 250,000 |
| 1890 | United Mine Workers founded |
| 1892 | Homestead steel strike; Weaver. Peoples Party candidate for President. polls one million votes |
| 1892 | Ellis Island opened |
| 1893 | Panic; AFL survives with 270,000 members |
| 1894 | Pullman strike by Deb's American Railroad Union; strike broken with injunctions. use of federal troops; Debs jailed for contempt |
| 1894 | Immigration Restriction League organized |
| 1894-96 | Armenian massacres |
| 1900 | Debs gets 96,000 votes for President of U.S. on Socialist Party ticket |
| 1900 | International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union founded |
| 1904 | AFL membership 1,676,000 (from 350,000 in 1899); anti-union employers' organizations formed |
| 1905 | Industrial Workers of the World established |
| 1905 | Japanese and Korean Exclusion League organized |
| 1907 | Depression in United States |
| 1909 | National Association for the Advancement of Colored People founded |
| 1911 | Triangle Shirtwaist Co. fire in N.Y. (146 workers die) leads to establishment of N.Y. Factory-Investigating Commission |
| 1912 | IWW Lawrence Textile Strike — Hitchman Coal case — W. Virginia judge labels UMW as a "conspiracy" |
| 1913 | IWW strike Paterson, New Jersey |
| 1913 | AFL membership 2,000,000 |
| 1914 | Clayton Act — Gompers hails labor's "Magna Carta" as prohibiting future injunctions vs. labor |
| 1914 | Amalgamated Clothing Workers founded following secession from United Garment Workers |
| 1916-19 | Americanization movement at its height |
| 1917 | Literacy test for immigrants adopted |
| 1917 | AFL support of war, labor accepts "no strike" pledge, government recognizes labor's right to organize government suppression of IWW, Hitchman Coal case — Supreme Court upholds "yellow dog" contract |
| 1919 | National Steel strike lost |
| 1919 | Red Scare — Palmer raids |
| 1920 | Membership peak: AFL 4,130,000; others 870,000; total 5,000,000 |

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| 1921 | Emergency immigration restriction law introduces quota system |
| 1923 | Ku Klux Klan reaches its peak |
| 1924 | National Origins Act adopted |
| 1926 | Railway Labor Act requires employers to bargain collectively and forbids discrimination against unionists |
| 1927 | Execution of Sacco and Vanzetti |
| 1929 | Great Depression begins |
| 1932 | Norris-LaGuardia Act prohibits Federal injunctions in labor disputes |
| 1933 | NIRA, Section 7 (A) passed guaranteeing right of employees to organize and bargain collectively |
| 1933 | Hitler becomes German chancellor; anti-Semitic campaign begins |
| 1934 | Philippine Independence Act restricts Filipino immigration |
| 1935 | NIRA declared unconstitutional; Wagner Act reaffirms Section 7 (A), establishes National Labor Relations Board |
| 1935 | Federal Social Security Act introduces unemployment insurance, old age benefits |
| 1935 | Formation of Committee for Industrial Organization (CIO) |
| 1937 | Sen. La Follette Civil Liberties Report; CIO General Motors sit-down strike; Wagner Act upheld by Court; Republic Steel "Memorial Day Massacre" |
| 1938 | Fair Labor Standards Act (minimum wage-maximum hour Act) |
| 1938 | CIO organized on permanent basis with John L. Lewis as President, U.S. Steel Corp. recognized Steel Workers Organizing Committee |
| 1941 | Pearl Harbor; unions make no-strike pledge |
| 1942 | Relocation of Japanese-Americans from Pacific Coast |
| 1942 | War Labor Board, "Little Steel" wage increase formula |
| 1943 | Roosevelt establishes Fair Employment Practices Committee to seek elimination of industrial discrimination |
| 1943 | Strikes cause federal take-over of mines, railroads |
| 1946 | National strikes (coal, autos, electric, railroads, oil, steel, meat packers) for wage increases; strike wave ends in wage increase of 18½ cents an hour |
| 1947 | Taft-Hartley Act, restricting union practices, passed by Congress, reinforced by state "right-to-work" laws |
| 1952 | Immigration and Naturalization Act |
| 1954 | Ellis Island closed |
| 1955 | AFL and CIO merge with Meany as President, COPE established |
| 1959 | Labor-Management Reporting and Disclosure Act passed by Congress |
| 1962 | Federal Employees gain the right to participate in collective bargaining |
| 1963 | Civil Rights March on Washington |
| 1964 | Civil Rights Act |

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| 1967 | United Farmworkers gain first contracts for migrant farmworkers in California |
| 1970 | 210,000 Postal Workers engage in an illegal, nationwide strike for fair pay; Occupational Safety and Health Act passes |
| 1972 | Equal Employment Act |
| 1974 | National Labor Relations Act amended to cover workers in private, non-profit hospitals |
| 1975 | Public employees strike in Pennsylvania; First legal strike of public employees |
| 1978 | Defeat of Labor Law Reform |
| 1981 | PATCO Strike; Government fires all unionized air traffic controllers; Rise of Solidarity in Poland; 500,000+ workers participate in Solidarity Day — largest national labor demonstration |
| 1983 | March on Washington commemorating 1963 Civil Rights March |

# Labor History Resources

## Books

The books listed below focus on racial and ethnic minorities as workers and their role in the building of the United States. Many of them can be found in local public libraries or in college libraries.


Bodnar, John, Simon, Roger, and Weber, Michael P., *Lives of Their Own — Blacks, Italians and Poles in Pittsburgh, 1900-1960*, University of Illinois Press, 1982.

Bodnar, John, *Workers' World-Kinship, Community and Protest in an Industrial Society, 1900-1940*, John Hopkins University Press, 1982.

Boyer, Richard O. and Morais, Herbert M., *Labor's Untold Story*, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, 1955.

Brestensky, Dennis F., Hovanec, Evelyn A. and Skomra, Albert N., *Patch-Work Voices — The Culture and Lore of a Mining People*, 1978.

Cahn, William, *A Pictorial History of American Labor*, Crown Publishers, 1972.

Carrion, Arturo Morales, *Puerto Rico — A Political and Cultural History*, W. W. Norton and Co. Inc., 1983.

Chen, Jack, *The Chinese of America*, Harper and Row, Inc., 1980.

Chiu, Ping, *Chinese Labor in California 1850-1880, an Economic Study*, University of Wisconsin, 1963.

Dubofsky, Melvin, *We Shall Be All — A History of the Industrial Workers of the World*, Quadrangle/The New York Times Book Company, 1969.

Ehrlich, Richard, Ed., *Immigrants in Industrial America, 1850 1920*, University Press of Virginia, 1977.

Feldstein, Stanley and Costello, Lawrence, *The Ordeal of Assimilation: A Documentary History of the White Working Class, 1830's to the 1970's*, Doubleday & Co., 1974.

Foner, Philip S., *The History of the Labor Movement in the United States*, 4 volumes, International Publishers Inc., 1947-1965.

Foner, Philip S., *Organized Labor and the Black Worker, 1919-1978*, Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1974.

Gutman, Herbert G. and Kealey, Gregory S., Eds., *Many Pasts: Readings in American Social History*, 2 volumes, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1973.
Gutman, Herbert G., *Work, Culture and Society in Industrializing America*, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1976.
Harris, William H., *The Harder We Run: Black Workers Since the Civil War*, Oxford University Press, 1982.
Hoerder, Dirk, Ed., *American Labor and Immigration History, 1877-1920's — Recent European Research*, University of Illinois Press, 1983.
Howe, Irving, *World of Our Fathers — The Journey of East European Jews to America and the Life They Found and Made*, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc., 1976.
Huberman, Leo, *We The People*, Harper & Row, Inc., 1947.
Jacobson, Julius, Ed., *The Negro and the American Labor Movement*, Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1968.
Jones, Maldwyn Allen, *American Immigration*, University of Chicago Press, 1960.
Katzman, David M. and Tuttle, William M., Eds., *Plain Folk: The Life Stories of Undistinguished Americans*, University of Illinois Press, 1982.
Maldonado-Denis, Manuel, *Puerto Rico: A Socio-Historic Interpretation*, Random House, 1972.
McWilliams, Carey, *Factories in the Field: The Story of Migratory Farm Labor in California*, Little, Brown, Inc., 1939.
Rivera, Angel Quintero, Ed., *Worker's Struggle in Puerto Rico: A Documentary History*, Monthly Review Press, 1976.
Saxton, Alexander P., *The Indispensable Enemy; Labor and the Anti-Chinese Movement in California*, University of California Press, 1971.
Schnapper, M. B., *American Labor — A Pictorial Social History*, Public Affairs Press, 1972.
Smith, Abbot Emerson, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607-1776*, University of North Carolina Press, 1947.
Steiner, Stan, *Fusang, The Chinese Who Built America*, Harper & Row, Inc., 1979.
Taylor, Philip, *The Distant Magnet — European Emigration to the U.S.A.*, Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1971.
Wertheimer, Barbara Mayer, *We Were There — The Story of Working Women in America*, Pantheon Books, Inc., 1977.
Woodham-Smith, Cecil, *The Great Hunger: Ireland 1845-49*, Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1962.
Zinn, Howard, *A People's History of the Unied States*, Harper & Row Publishers, Inc., 1980.

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# Films

Many of the films on this list can be obtained from the AFL-CIO in Washington, D.C. Feature films can be obtained from commercial distributors.

*Birth of a Union* (28 minutes) & *Huelga* (53 minutes)
These two films trace the efforts of migratory Mexican farmworkers to form a union in the American southwest. (AFL-CIO)

*Bullet Bargaining at Ludlow* (25 minutes)
Immigrant and native-born miners struck the Rockefeller owned Colorado Fuel and Iron Company in 1913. The Denver produced documentary tells about the confrontation, including the deaths of 11 children and 2 women. (AFL-CIO)

*Eugene Debs and the American Movement* (42 minutes)
This film is a biographical documentary about the struggles of working people to obtain better conditions during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, and the role of Eugene Debs in that effort. (Cambridge Documentary Films)

*I Am A Man* (28 minutes)
In 1968, sanitation workers in Memphis, Tennessee went on strike to obtain a decent contract. Martin Luther King was assassinated while aiding the strikers, most of whom were black. The efforts of the labor movement and civil rights groups to end the walkout are explored in this film. (AFSCME)

*Maria* (40 minutes)
The difficulties in organizing a small garment shop are explored in this film. It deals with the efforts of a young woman to organize a workforce of people from very different ethnic and racial backgrounds. (AFL-CIO)

*Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggle* (59 minutes)
A social history of black railroad workers concentrating on the rise of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. Narrated by the wife of one of the founders of the union. (AFL-CIO)

*Northern Lights* (93 minutes)
This feature-length film tells the story of how midwestern farmers of Scandanavian decent organized a political movement to fight the eastern banks, the railroads and the grain companies in the early 20th century.

*Packingtown, U.S.A.* (35 minutes)
This is the story of the Chicago stockyards and the organizational struggles of immigrant workers before the formation of a union.

*Poletown Lives* (52 minutes) and *What's Good for General Motors* (43 minutes)
These films examine the impact on the Polish and black inhabitants of one Detroit neighborhood of the decision by G.M. to build a new plant in their community.

*Portrait in Black — A. Philip Randolph* (10 minutes)

Randolph, President of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters tells the story of his union's efforts to win better conditions for all workers. (AFL-CIO)

*Salt of the Earth* (94 minutes)

A strike by Mexican-American miners in New Mexico is the basis for this feature-length film. It explores the relationship between Mexican-Americans and "Anglos" as well as the role of local women in winning the strike.

*Stockyards: The End of an Era* (60 minutes)

The documentary, produced by a local TV station describes the meat packing industry in Chicago and the many ethnic groups that came to work there. (AFL-CIO)

*The Emigrants* (148 minutes) & *The New Land* (161 minutes)

These two full-length films, produced in Sweden, trace the experiences of a Swedish family as they leave their home for America. They graphically depict the challenges and difficulties facing settlers on the frontier.

*The Inheritance* (55 minutes)

Produced by the Amalgamated Clothing Workers, this documentary traces the long, bitter struggle of workers against economic exploitation. It examines the contribution of immigrants to the building of the American labor movement. (AFL-CIO)

*The Life and Times of Rosie the Riveter* (65 minutes)

This film examines the role of women of various racial, and ethnic backgrounds in the defense industry during World War II, and how they were forced back into traditional female occupations at the end of the war. (Clarity Education Productions, AFL-CIO)

*The Wobblies* (89 minutes)

The Industrial Workers of the World attempted to organize immigrants and minorities into industrial unions thirty years before the formation of the CIO. This documentary describes the history of the IWW through the use of interviews with former Wobblies. (Centre for Educational Productions)

*Union Maids* (48 minutes)

The reminiscenses of three former, female Chicago stockyard workers are the focus of this highly acclaimed film. It explores the role of ethnic and racial minorities in the building of the CIO.

*With Babies and Banners* (45 minutes)

Nine women tell of their roles as members of the Women's Emergency Brigade during the 1937 sitdown strikes in Detroit. Their experiences reflect those of 2nd and 3rd generation Americans who helped to build the modern American labor movement. (AFL-CIO)

Publications Available from The Department of Labor Studies
The Pennsylvania State University

**Monograph Series**

Labor and Technology: Union Response to Changing Environments
Labor and Reindustrialization: Workers and Corporate Change

**Pamphlet Series**

A Union Member's Guide to the New Right
Hazardous Chemicals: A Guide to Reducing Exposure

**Quarterly Newsletter**

Pennsylvania Labor

Copies of the above should be ordered from:

The Department of Labor Studies
The Pennsylvania State University
901 Liberal Arts Tower
University Park, PA 16802